

O P 021640Z OCT 08
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST IMMEDIATE
INFO WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 0000
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 105450

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/26/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [RO](#)

SUBJECT: THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH ROMANIAN
MINISTER OF DEFENSE MELESCANU, SEPTEMBER 24, 4 PM,
WASHINGTON D.C.

Classified By: EUR ACTING A/S MARCIE RIES, FOR REASONS 1.4(b), (d)

11. (U) Participants:

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary
PM A/S Mark Kimmitt
EUR DAS Judy Garber
Mary Sue Conaway, D Special Assistant
Alex Tratensek, Notetaker

Romania

Defense Minister Teodor Melescanu
Ambassador Adrian Vierita
Lt. Gen. Sorin Ioan, Romanian Military Representative to NATO
Brig. Gen. Liviu Serban, Defense Attache
Brig. Gen. Viorel Angelescu, Chief of Cabinet, Ministry of Defense
Brig. Gen. Florea Posteuca, Advisor to the Minister

12. (C) SUMMARY. During a thirty-minute meeting with the Deputy Secretary, Romanian Defense Minister Melescanu explored challenges to the Romanian deployment in Iraq following the upcoming mandate shift, and suggested using another United Nations Security Council Resolution to extend the mandate. On Afghanistan, Melescanu asked for better coordination among civilian and military authorities. He said Black Sea issues dominate Romanian strategic thinking, notably on Georgia, the Russian fleet presence, and oil and gas supplies. Melescanu pressed the case for extending missile defense coverage to Romanian territory, and expressed concern Romania might be targeted by Iran in the event of an Israel - Iran conflict. END SUMMARY.

Iraq and Afghanistan: Highest Bilateral Military
Priorities

13. (C) Romania seeks the simplest "way" of providing coverage for its troops in Iraq after expiration of the existing United Nations (U.N.) mandate, including an exchange of notes with the Government of Iraq extending the terms of the U.S. - Iraq Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to Romanian forces. Iraq's foreign minister reportedly suggested extending the U.N. mandate in lieu of completing negotiations on the U.S. - Iraq SOFA, an idea Melescanu found personally compelling. DefMin Melescanu reminded the Deputy Secretary that Romania would likely need more military assistance to support U.S. efforts in Iraq, for example, with new unmanned aerial vehicles. The Deputy Secretary pushed back on the idea of extending the U.N. mandate and reiterated that the U.S. would continue to negotiate a SOFA with Iraq. The Deputy Secretary showed appreciation for Romania's role in Iraq, and agreed to keep DefMin Melescanu's request for more military assistance in mind.

¶4. (C) On Afghanistan, DefMin Melescanu underlined the need for better coordination among all international organizations and military commands. He stated that Romania was making efforts to strengthen the Afghan National Army, and had recently sent an Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team to the Qalat Garrison in Zabul Province, with another, at the battalion level, to follow. The best approach to use with the Romanian Government, per Melescanu, is not to ask for more troops, but to request other means of assistance. The Deputy Secretary expressed hope coordination would improve with recent efforts to streamline command and control.

Black Sea Issues

¶5. (C) DefMin Melescanu observed that Turkey and Russia were intent to keep the Black Sea under their control. Romania opposes keeping the Black Sea out of the international and especially NATO context. In furtherance of Romanian policy, a recent NATO naval exercise in the Black Sea was very important in showing the linkage between the Black Sea and NATO. The Russian Black Sea fleet remains a concern to Romanian military planners. In a move reminiscent of the Cold War, the Russians shadowed the NATO maneuvers at close range. Melescanu also expressed some concern that internal instability in Ukraine might possibly affect Romanian natural gas supplies.

¶6. (C) On Georgia, Melescanu observed that Russia was "playing rough," and believed it important that alliance members not allow Russia to set NATO's agenda. He expressed regret that Romanian military observers in the new EU mission had thus far been denied access to the occupied areas in Georgia, and as a consequence remained in Tbilisi. The Georgian case, per Melescanu, was instructive, for it showed that frozen conflicts, such as those in Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh, required active resolution.

Iran and Missile Defense

¶7. (C) DefMin Melescanu reminded the Deputy Secretary that Romanian territory is outside an umbrella formed by the planned deployment of a missile defense (MD) system in the Czech Republic and Poland. He expressed concern that the P5+1 negotiations with Iran were making little headway, and that Israel might choose to strike first. In that event, Melescanu warned, Romania lay within easy range of Iranian missiles fired in retaliation. According to him, NATO is lagging far behind the U.S. on developing a political approach toward missile defense, and needs a coordinated early warning system against ballistic missile attacks. Accordingly, Romania is seeking AEGIS air defense systems for its navy frigates to provide an interim MD solution. The Deputy Secretary said he understood Romania's concerns, and promised to take up the matter with U.S. SecDef Gates.

Other Issues

¶8. (U) In addition to the issues raised above, DefMin Melescanu touched on the following:

- (C) NATO HUMINT Center of Excellence: Romania would like to have a visiting professor from the U.S. on faculty.
- (U) NATO Training Facilities: Romania would like to see a permanent U.S. military cadre presence and higher training tempo.